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Expansion Of General Education And Growth Of Teaching Staff Competence In The Uzbekistan Ssr (1950–1970)

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ABSTRACT

The article analyzes the processes of expanding the scope of general education and increasing the potential of pedagogical personnel in the Uzbek SSR in the 1950s-1970s. Post-war socio-economic recovery, demographic growth, and the need for qualified personnel of the national economy are considered as the main factors that influenced the development of the education system. The growth of the number of schools and students, the process of implementing compulsory education, and the quantitative and qualitative changes in pedagogical personnel are covered on the basis of statistical data. The general processes in the republic are comparatively concretized with materials from the Kashkadarya region. Also, the material and technical, personnel, and territorial problems that arose in the process of popularizing education are assessed.

Keywords:

Uzbek SSR, general education, school, students, teaching staff, compulsory education, literacy, Kashkadarya, demographic growth, educational coverage

The restoration of socio-economic life in the Uzbek SSR after World War II set new tasks for the education system. The rapid growth of the population, the expansion of economic sectors, and the increasing need for qualified personnel made the massification of general education an objective necessity. In these conditions, along with the expansion of the school network, the issue of providing them with pedagogical personnel became one of the important directions of state educational policy. In particular, the full implementation of compulsory education in rural areas was directly dependent on the state of the material and technical base and the provision of teachers. In this regard, it is important to analyze the changes that occurred in the coverage of general education and the potential of pedagogical personnel in the republic in the 1950s-1970s in an interrelated manner.

The 1950s were a period of recovery for the education system of the Uzbek SSR from the

losses incurred during the war years and the further expansion of general education. The fact that the main part of economic and material resources were directed to military needs in wartime conditions also had a negative impact on the activities of schools. The lack of buildings, educational equipment and teaching staff became one of the urgent problems of the education system in the first post-war years. Therefore, the process of transferring the economy to the path of peaceful development was carried out in conjunction with the tasks of restoring the material and technical base of educational institutions and attracting school-age children to education more widely.

The Fifth Five-Year Plan for 1951–1955, adopted at the 19th Congress of the CPSU in 1952, also set out tasks for expanding public education. In order to provide the growing network of schools with the necessary pedagogical personnel, it was envisaged to

increase admissions to pedagogical institutes by 45 percent in 1951–1955 compared to 1946–1950 [1]. The separate inclusion of this task in the plan indicates that increasing the number of schools alone was not enough, and that expanding the scope of education was inextricably linked with training pedagogical personnel.

One of the main directions of the post-war education policy was the full implementation of compulsory seven-year education. Although the process of its introduction in cities and working-class settlements began before the war, its full implementation on a national scale mainly occurred between 1949 and 1956. However, there was a certain gap between the task set by the decree and the possibilities for its implementation on the ground. Especially in rural areas, the lack of school buildings, equipment and qualified teachers had a negative impact on the coverage of compulsory education.

This is clearly seen in the indicators of students completing seven years of education. In the 1953–1954 school year, 52.5 percent of students admitted to the fifth grade completed seven years of education, while in the 1954–1955 school year this figure was 53.3 percent [2]. Thus, despite the legal and organizational introduction of compulsory education, a significant part of students did not complete the required stage. This shows that it is not enough to assess the process of mass education solely by the number of schools or the number of students.

Despite this, the coverage of school education in the Uzbek SSR was steadily expanding. In 1953, there were 5,144 general education schools in the republic, with more than 1,260,000 students. Considering that the population of the republic at that time was approximately 6.2 million, those studying in schools accounted for almost one-fifth of the republic's population [3]. This ratio also indicates the high age structure of the republic's population and the demographic burden on educational institutions.

These trends in the republic can also be observed in the example of the Kashkadarya region. By 1955, 475 schools were operating in

the region, with 85,186 students studying in them [4]. Over the next twenty years, these indicators changed significantly. In the 1974–1975 academic year, the number of schools in the Kashkadarya region reached 752, and the number of students reached 296.2 thousand [8]. Thus, while the number of schools increased by approximately 1.6 times, the number of students increased by more than 3 times. This indicates that, along with the expansion of the network of educational institutions, the demographic burden on existing schools also increased rapidly.

The number and level of qualification of pedagogical personnel played a decisive role in the popularization of general education. The number of pedagogical personnel in Uzbekistan increased from 38,882 to 75,254 by the 1958–1959 academic year. At the same time, the number of teachers with higher education increased from 2,936 in 1940 to 20,233 in the 1958–1959 academic year [6]. That is, while the total number of teachers almost doubled, the number of teachers with higher education increased almost sevenfold. This change can be assessed not only as an increase in the number of personnel, but also as an increase in the level of professional training among teachers.

The increase in the proportion of women in the teaching staff was also one of the important social characteristics of the period. The significant increase in the number of female teachers by the end of the 1950s indicates that women's opportunities for professional education and participation in social production are expanding [6]. In particular, the education sector has become one of the main areas that has widely involved women in social work. This process, while satisfying the demand for teaching staff, has also led to certain changes in the social structure of the republic.

The expansion of educational coverage was also reflected in the dynamics of population literacy. According to the International Institute for Educational Planning, the literacy rate among the population aged 9–49 in Uzbekistan rose from 78.7 percent in 1940 to 99.7 percent by 1970. Among men, this indicator increased from 83.6 percent to 99.8

percent, and among women from 73.3 percent to 99.6 percent [6]. In particular, one of the results of the massification of education was the sharp reduction in the gap between male and female literacy.

These results were inextricably linked to the expansion of the network of general educational institutions. In the 1958–1959 academic year, 757,038 students studied in primary grades of schools in the republic, 349,172 in grades V–VIII, and 199,118 in higher grades [6]. These data also show that coverage with primary education was quite high, but the number of students decreased as they moved to later stages of education. In this context, it would not be correct to interpret high literacy rates and coverage of complete secondary education as the same indicator.

In the 1960s and 1970s, demographic growth became one of the most important factors affecting the education system. The increase in population and the proportion of school-age children required the construction of new schools, the expansion of existing buildings, and the training of more teachers. This process was also reflected in the number of students per 10,000 population. In the 1965–1966 academic year, there were 2,339 secondary school students per 10,000 population in the republic, while in the 1970–1971 academic year this figure reached 2,698 [7]. In the 1974–1975 academic year, this figure was 2,744 [8].

In the 1974–1975 academic year, the number of secondary schools in the Uzbek SSR reached 9,505, with 3,736.8 thousand students enrolled [8]. Compared with 5,144 schools and more than 1.26 million students in 1953, over the past twenty years the number of schools has increased by almost 1.8 times, and the number of students by almost 3 times. The difference between these two indicators indicates that the number of students has grown faster than the school network. As a result, along with the construction of new educational institutions, it was natural that issues such as overcrowding, multi-shift teaching, and increased demand for teachers became urgent.

The expansion of the education system also required providing it with textbooks and educational literature. In the republic,

hundreds of textbooks in various languages were published in millions of copies for primary and secondary schools [5]. This made it possible to strengthen the material basis of the educational process and organize mass education on the basis of unified programs. However, the centralized textbook policy also led to the formation of the content of education on the basis of a single ideological template. In this sense, with the popularization of education, centralized control over its content was simultaneously strengthened.

This feature of Soviet educational policy can be assessed from two perspectives. On the one hand, a single state policy made it possible to expand the school network in a short historical period, achieve almost universal literacy of the population, and train a large number of pedagogical personnel. On the other hand, the priority given to quantitative indicators of education did not completely eliminate the problems associated with its quality, material and technical differences between regions, and the real effectiveness of the educational process. The issue of providing schools and teachers in rural areas remained constantly relevant, especially in republics with high demographic growth.

Thus, the popularization of general education in the Uzbek SSR in the 1950s–1970s encompassed several processes at once. The expansion of the school network was accompanied by a rapid increase in the number of students, which increased the demand for pedagogical personnel. The increase in the number of teachers and the share of specialists with higher education among them strengthened the human resources potential of the education system. The literacy rate reaching an almost total indicator was one of the most important social results of this policy. However, the problem of ensuring the balance between quantitative growth and the quality of education and equalization of territorial opportunities remained.

In conclusion, the expansion of general education coverage in the Uzbek SSR in the 1950s–1970s was inextricably linked to demographic and socio-economic processes in the republic. The rapid growth in the number

of schools and students increased the need for pedagogical personnel, requiring an increase in the scope of teacher training and their professional qualifications. As a result, the literacy of the population reached almost universal, and general education became a mass institution of public life. The materials of the Kashkadarya region show that, along with the general growth in the republic, there was a need for a continuous expansion of the educational infrastructure in conditions of demographic pressure. At the same time, regional differences in material and technical support, a shortage of pedagogical personnel, and centralized management remained the main internal contradictions in the development of the education system.

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